

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: TONGA ILBO ISSUES ULTIMATUM TO STAFF; KJA ANNOUNCES
COMMISSION

REF: SEOUL 1770; SEOUL 1727; SEOUL 1689

1. LOCAL MEDIA ON MARCH 28 IS REPORTING THAT TONGA
MANAGEMENT HAS ACCEPTED RESIGNATION OF MANAGING EDITOR
SONG KON-HO, DISMISSED TWELVE EDITORS, SUB-EDITORS,
REPORTERS, PRODUCERS AND CAMERAMEN, AND SUSPENDED SEVEN
RADIO PROGRAM PRODUCERS.

2. SONG'S RESIGNATION HAS BEEN RUMORED FOR SOME TIME.
REMAINING SEVENTEEN ALLEGEDLY HAD REFUSED TO WORK TO
PUT OUT NEWSPAPER OR WORK ON RADIO BROADCASTS. TONGA
MANAGEMENT REPORTEDLY SENT "LETTER OF ULTIMATUM" TO
SEVEN SUSPENDED EMPLOYEES TO INFORM THEM THEY MUST
RETURN TO WORK BY NOON, MARCH 31 OR BE DISMISSED.
TWELVE WHO WERE FIRED APPARENTLY WERE NOT GIVEN
THAT OPTION.

3. MEDIA CLAIMS THAT TONGA HAS FIRED 49 EMPLOYEES
IN PAST MONTH AND SUSPENDED SEVEN. TONGA HAS NOT
CARRIED MARCH 28 STORY.

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4. ON SAME DATE, KOREAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION (KJA)
ANNOUNCED NAMES OF TEN PROMINENT KOREANS OF VARYING
BACKGROUNDS TO SERVE ON "FACT-FINDING COMMISSION" TO
EXPLORE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT TONGA AND CHOSUN ILBO.
INCLUDED IN TEN ARE CHON SONG-CHON (PRESIDENT OF
CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING SYSTEM), HAN WAN-SAN
(PROFESSOR AT SNU INTERESTED IN HUMAN RIGHTS CASES),
CHON KWAN-U (FORMER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF TONGA),
YI HANG-NYONG (PRESIDENT OF HONGIK UNIVERSITY),
PAEK CHAL (KOREA BRANCH CHAIRMAN OF PEN CLUB), PAK
SUN-YANG (SECRETARY-GENERAL OF YWCA), KIM KWANG-SOP(FORMER
VICE PRE SIDENT OF HAPDONG NEWS AGENCY), KIM KWAN-SOK
(KOREAN CHRISTIAN COUNCIL GENERAL SECRETARY), A LAWYER
AND A CATHOLIC PRIEST.
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